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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
Administration of the North)
American Numbering Plan)
_____)

CC Docket No. 92-237
Phase I

REPLY COMMENTS

Sprint Corporation ("Sprint"), on behalf of Sprint Communications Company LP and the United Telephone companies, hereby respectfully submits its Reply to comments filed December 28, 1992 in the above-captioned proceeding. As discussed briefly below, numbering policy issues should be considered by a non-partisan forum with guidance from relevant regulatory bodies, and implementation of policy decisions should be delegated to an unaffiliated ministerial entity. While some issues regarding local number portability are not yet ripe for decision, actions can be taken which will ensure that NANP resources are made available to service providers on a reasonable and nondiscriminatory basis.

I. NEUTRALITY IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE NANP CAN BE ACHIEVED ONLY THROUGH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INDEPENDENT ENTITY.

A. Bellcore Should Not Continue to Serve As NANPA.

All commenting parties agree that administration of the NANP--both development of policy and performance of the ministerial functions associated with number administration--must be neutral and unbiased. However, there is some

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disagreement over whether Bellcore should be replaced as the NANPA. Most parties agree that in order to avoid conflicts of interest (whether actual or potential), administration of the NANP should be transferred from Bellcore to an entity unaffiliated with a particular segment of the industry.¹ These parties cite numerous instances in which Bellcore has adopted positions favored by the LECs and opposed by other industry segments. For example, Bellcore has attempted to impose an eighteen month "permissive dialing" period for the transition to 101XXXX dialing, over the strong objections of IXC's; has resisted efforts to make nongeographic dialing codes available to mobile service providers; drafted a "long range plan" which divided NANP resources disproportionately in favor of the LECs;² and refused to assign INPA codes for inbound international interexchange services.

¹See, e.g., Sprint, pp. 3-6; Ad Hoc, pp. 28-33; Allnet, p. 3; American Personal Communications, pp. 1-2; AT&T, pp. 2-4; CTIA, p. 2; Cox, pp. 2-6; IIA, p. 3; McCaw, pp. 5-8; MCI, pp. 2-15; MFS, pp. 3-4; NARUC, p. 4; PageNet, p. 2; Teleport, pp. 2-3; Telocator, pp. 3-4; Vanguard Cellular Systems, pp. 1-2. Although some of the BOCs assert that Bellcore has done an "exemplary" job as NANPA, they acknowledge that other parties' concerns about Bellcore's impartiality could affect the effectiveness of Bellcore as NANPA, and therefore agree that administration of the NANP should be transferred from Bellcore to another entity (see, e.g., Bell Atlantic, p. 1; BellSouth, pp. 5-7).

²Bellcore's initial long term numbering proposal suggested that 300 of the new INPAs be assigned to geographic services and 80 to non-geographic services. Bellcore subsequently revised its allocation proposal to assign 160 INPAs each to geographic and non-geographic services.

In contrast, several parties--all LECs--suggest that Bellcore should continue to serve as the NANPA either indefinitely, or at least through 1995, when interchangeable NPAs have been implemented.³ Both of these recommendations should be rejected. As is clear from the above examples, lack of neutrality in the current administration of the NANP can have a significant detrimental impact on a service provider's operational and strategic initiatives. Neither a structural separation nor an industry "advisory group" is sufficient to prevent preferential treatment; Bellcore would remain an entity owned by and answerable to the BOCs. Indeed, there is no indication that Bellcore would be in any way obliged to follow the recommendations of its "advisory" group. In any event, the fact that the only parties to urge retention of Bellcore as the NANPA are LECs is, in and of itself, an indication of Bellcore's lack of neutrality.

There is also no reason to wait until 1995 to replace Bellcore as NANPA. Implementation of interchangeable NPAs can go forward under a new NANPA. To the extent that Bellcore's technical expertise is necessary to perform the administrative functions associated with implementing interchangeable NPAs, and no alternatives are available, Sprint does not object to Bellcore's continuing to serve temporarily in this ministerial

³See, e.g., Pacific, p. 4; GTE, p. 5; North Pittsburgh Telephone Co., p. 2; Rochester, p. 2. LEC entities urging retention of Bellcore as NANPA through 1995 include Bell Atlantic, p. 2; Bell Canada, p. 3; SNET, p. 2; SWB, p. 4; and USTA, p. 9.

capacity. However, Bellcore should no longer serve as the entity which develops NANP policy. Important decisions regarding the allocation of NANP resources, such as assignment of codes for PCS, will have to be made between now and 1995. If such decisions are to be made in a way which will promote the public interest, they should be made and implemented by an entity which is not owned or under the influence of specific interested parties.

B. NANP Policy Should Be Determined by A Broad-Based Industry Coalition With FCC Guidance.

The parties advocating replacement of Bellcore as NANPA offer various alternative arrangements. In Sprint's view, whatever plan is adopted should include the following elements:

- Whatever body is formed to consider NANP policy and operational issues should be open to all interested parties, including LECs, IXCs, CAPs, ESPs, PCS providers, mobile service providers, and regulators.⁴ Participation must be broad-based in order to ensure that all interests are fairly represented, and to provide adequate opportunity for the introduction of new services and the development of viable competition. While active FCC participation would seem to be desirable (e.g., having a FCC staff member co-chair the

⁴See, e.g., Sprint, p. 5; AT&T, p. 5; BellSouth, p. 12; CTIA, p. 3; Cox, p. 8; McCaw, p. 11; MCI, p. 19; MFS, p. 4; Pacific, p. 5; Telocator, p. 7; Unitel, p. 3.

industry forum), it is to be hoped that the Commission would at least attend and monitor the industry meetings.⁵

Some parties suggest that separate NANP policy and administrative organizations be established. Sprint has no strong objections to either a combined or a separate structure, so long as the neutrality of the resulting organization(s) is assured. Thus, if the industry decides to issue an RFP to select a separate entity to perform the ministerial NANP tasks, such entity, like the broad-based policy organization, should not be affiliated with any particular interest group.

- The FCC should set basic numbering policy.⁶ The industry-wide body contemplated by Sprint and other parties could "provide an initial forum for problem identification and discussion, and for arriving at consensus resolution wherever possible" (AT&T, p. 6). However, because NANP assets are a national resource, the Commission must provide broad guidance on their use, and serve as the arbiter in cases where consensus is not possible and as the appeals body when disputes arise.

- Numbering issues should be consolidated before a single venue. This will ensure consistency in the treatment of NANP resource requests, avoid fragmentation of numbering issues

⁵Such meetings could be held in Washington, D.C. for the Commission's convenience.

⁶See, e.g., Sprint, p. 9; Ad Hoc, pp. 30-31; Allnet, p. 1; BellSouth, p. 11; Cox, p. 10; GTE, p. 10; MCI, p. 23; NCTA, p. 3.

among multiple groups, and maximize the likelihood of participation by interested parties.⁷

- Funding for NANP administration should be shared equitably by all participants.⁸

II. PERSONAL AND PORTABLE NUMBERS WARRANT FURTHER STUDY.

The Notice of Inquiry sought comment on the feasibility of offering PCS numbering and local number portability. Although it seems premature at this point for the Commission to mandate availability of either PCS or local number portability by a date certain, the Commission could, in conjunction with industry efforts, establish guidelines for the allocation of NANP resources which will facilitate introduction of personal communications services and competition in the local exchange. At a minimum, the Commission should make clear that industry segments such as cellular carriers cannot be barred from obtaining NANP resources (such as nongeographic codes) needed to provide service.

Various parties note that PCS and local number portability issues are already being considered in, or should be referred

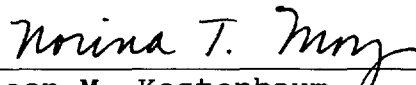
⁷See, e.g., Sprint, pp. 5-6; Bellcore, p. 8; BellSouth, p. 12; CTIA, p. 3; Cox, p. 9; McCaw, p. 7; MCI, pp. 15-19; Pacific, p. 5; PageNet, pp. 7-8; SWB, pp. 4-5; Telocator, p. 5. In May 1992, Sprint requested that the Carrier Liaison Committee investigate, among other things, whether consolidating NANP resource assignment issues under one industry organization would be beneficial.

⁸See, e.g., Sprint, p. 6; AT&T, p. 5; Bell Atlantic, p. 2; BellSouth, p. 13; Cox, p. 11; GTE, p. 11; MCI, p. 29; Pacific, p. 7; SWB, p. 7.

to, industry fora. For example, BellSouth urges that the Commission give "industry fora currently considering PCS issues a reasonable opportunity to conclude their work before taking any specific regulatory action" (p. 14). US West similarly urges that relevant industry fora develop a set of "useful definitions" as to what constitutes local number portability (p. 4). While further study into the relative costs and benefits of personal and portable numbers is warranted, such study should be consolidated before a single venue and a time limit should be imposed upon the industry to generate an end product. Such actions will concentrate industry efforts and help to avoid stonewalling by entities which may wish to avoid progress in the implementation of personal and portable numbers.

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the "Reply Comments" of Sprint Corporation have been sent via first-class mail, postage-prepaid, on this the 24th day of February, 1993, to the below-listed parties:

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